

Archbishop-elect Richard Moth's homily at Vespers ahead of his Installation



On the eve of his Installation as the twelfth Archbishop of Westminster, Archbishop-elect Richard Moth gave this homily at Solemn Pontifical Vespers in Westminster Cathedral.

Full homily

Dear brothers and sisters,

Yes, I am still pinching myself! I thank all those of you who are joining in this celebration of Vespers, those of you here in this great cathedral, and those joining us by livestream. As we offer this Evening Prayer of the Church, I am especially grateful for your prayers as I prepare for the Mass of Installation tomorrow and the great responsibilities to which the Lord Himself calls me.

Our celebration this evening began with the Litany of the Saints. It is wonderful to reflect that those of our family gone before us in faith and whose holiness of life has been recognised by the Church are praying for our diocese and for the world, and in thanksgiving for Cardinal Vincent's ministry over many years, and for me in this moment as I prepare to journey with all in this diocese on our pilgrimage of faith, of witness, and of service.

We are praying Vespers of Our Lady, and we would do well to reflect on the response of our Blessed Mother to God's call to her. Mary is called to be the mother of the Saviour, the Word made Flesh, God with us. She has been prepared for this since the very first moment of her conception, but she could not have imagined the import of the call, the consequences of her fiat – her 'yes' to God's call.

She was gifted with courage to respond as she did and to remain with her Son, not always understanding his actions, right to that dreadful moment when she stood at the foot of the Cross, her heart pierced as Simeon had prophesied, and then to the joy of the Resurrection. From the Cross, Jesus places John, The Beloved Disciple, in her care. And in this action, we have always seen Jesus placing us with John in her care.

So when we reflect on the call the Lord gives to us, that call to witness and to service, we respond with the confidence that Mary intercedes for us. She stands with us in our trials and our sufferings, and in our moments of joy. She stands as an example of the consequences of a 'yes' to the Lord. She reminds us that we shall not always understand the ways of her Son. She reminds us that suffering and sorrow will always be part of our journey. She reminds us that the joy of the resurrection and the wonder of life with her Son in His kingdom is our destiny. Saint Paul, writing to the Philippians, reminds us of the wonder of knowing Jesus and the thoroughgoing nature of the Christian way. Mary models this way for us and accompanies us on the journey.

So as we offer this evening praise, I ask you to join me in prayer for our diocese, that each and every one of us may respond ever more deeply to the call we received initially at baptism. May we all forge ahead through prayer and through the service that flows only from that prayer in the adventure of the Gospel for the prize to which we are called.

Let us respond with the generosity of Mary to the particular calls the Lord then makes to us and renew that response each and every day. Let us find confidence in this journey, mindful that Mary, our mother, pray with us and for us, together with all the saints.

